Tafsir Ibn Kathir

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لاَ رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah

Masad

Revealed in Makkah

بِسْمِ اللّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

تَبَّتْ يَدَآ أَبِى لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ

111:1 Perish the two hands of Abu Lahab and perish he!

مَآ أَغْنَى عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ

111:2 His wealth and his children will not benefit him!

سَيَصْلَى نَاراً ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ

111:3 He will enter a Fire full of flames!

وَامْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ

111:4 And his wife too, who carries wood.

فِى جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ

111:5 In her neck is a twisted rope of Masad.

The Reason for the Revelation of this Surah and the Arrogance of Abu Lahab toward the Messenger of Allah

Al-Bukhari recorded from Ibn Abbas that;

> The Prophet went out to the valley of Al-Batha and he ascended the mountain. Then he cried out, يَا صَبَاحَاه O people, come at once! So the Quraysh gathered around him. Then he said,
>
> أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ حَدَّثْتُكُمْ أَنَّ الْعَدُوَّ مُصَبِّحُكُمْ، أَوْ مُمَسِّيكُمْ أَكُنْتُمْ تُصَدِّقُونِّي ؟
>
> If I told you all that the enemy was going to attack you in the morning, or in the evening, would you all believe me?
>
> They replied, "Yes.''
>
> Then he said,
>
> فَإِنِّي نَذِيرٌ لَكُمْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيد
>
> > Verily, I am a warner (sent) to you all before the coming of a severe torment.
>
> Then Abu Lahab said,
>
> "Have you gathered us for this! May you perish!''
>
> Thus, Allah revealed,
>
> تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ (١)

Perish the two hands of Abu Lahab and perish he! to the end of the Surah.

In another narration it states that he stood up dusting of his hands and said,

"Perish you for the rest of this day! Have you gathered us for this''

Then Allah revealed, تَبَّتْ يَدَآ أَبِى لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ

The first part is a supplication against him and the second is information about him.

This man Abu Lahab was one of the uncles of the Messenger of Allah. His name was Abdul-Uzza bin Abdul-Muttalib. His surname was Abu Utaybah and he was only called Abu Lahab because of the brightness of his face. He used to often cause harm to the Messenger of Allah. He hated and scorned him and his religion.

Imam Ahmad recorded from Abu Az-Zinad that;

a man called Rabi`ah bin Abbad from the tribe of Bani Ad-Dil, who was a man of pre-Islamic ignorance who accepted Islam, said to him, "I saw the Prophet in the time of pre-Islamic ignorance in the market of Dhul-Majaz and he was saying,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، قُولُوا: لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ تُفْلِحُوا

O people! Say there is no god worthy of worship except Allah and you will be successful.

The people were gathered around him and behind him there was a man with a bright face, squint (or cross) eyes and two braids in his hair. He was saying,

"Verily, he is an apostate (from our religion) and a liar!''

This man was following him (the Prophet) around wherever he went. So, I asked who was he and they (the people) said,

"This is his uncle, Abu Lahab.''

Ahmad also recorded this narration from Surayj, who reported it from Ibn Abu Az-Zinad, who reported it from his father (Abu Zinad) who mentioned this same narration.

However in this report, Abu Zinad said,

"I said to Rabi`ah, `Were you a child at that time!'

He replied,

`No. By Allah, that day I was most intelligent, and I was the strongest blower of the flute (for music).'''

Ahmad was alone in recording this **Hadith**.

Concerning Allah's statement,

مَا أَغْنَى عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ (٢)

His wealth and his children **(Kasab)** will not benefit him!

Ibn Abbas and others have said, وَمَا كَسَبَ and his children **(Kasab)** will not benefit him!

"**Kasab** means his children.''

A similar statement has been reported from Aishah, Mujahid, Ata', Al-Hasan and Ibn Sirin.

It has been mentioned from Ibn Masud that when the Messenger of Allah called his people to faith, Abu Lahab said,

"Even if what my nephew says is true, I will ransom myself (i.e., save myself) from the painful torment on the Day of Judgement with my wealth and my children.''

Thus, Allah revealed, مَآ أَغْنَى عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ (His wealth and his children will not benefit him!)

Then Allah says,

سَيَصْلَى نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ (٣)

He will enter a Fire full of flames!

meaning, it has flames, evil and severe burning.

The Destiny of Umm Jamil, the Wife of Abu Lahab

Allah also says,

وَامْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ (٤)

And his wife too, who carries wood.

His wife was among the leading women of the Quraysh and she was known as Umm Jamil. Her name was Arwah bint Harb bin Umayyah and she was the sister of Abu Sufyan. She was supportive of her husband in his disbelief, rejection and obstinacy. Therefore, she will be helping to administer his punishment in the fire of Hell on the Day of Judgement.

Thus, Allah says,

... حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ

فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ (٥)

Who carries wood. In her neck is a twisted rope of **Masad**.

meaning, she will carry the firewood and throw it upon her husband to increase that which he is in (of torment), and she will be ready and prepared to do so.

فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ In her neck is a twisted rope of **Masad**. Mujahid and Urwah both said,

"From the palm fiber of the Fire.''

Al-Awfi narrated from Ibn Abbas, Atiyah Al-Jadali, Ad-Dahhak and Ibn Zayd that;

> she used to place thorns in the path of the Messenger of Allah.

Al-Jawhari said,

> "**Al-Masad** refers to fibers, it is also a rope made from fibers or palm leaves.
>
> It is also made from the skins of camels or their furs.
>
> It is said (in Arabic) **Masadtul-Habla** and **Amsaduhu Masadan**, when you tightly fasten its twine.''

Mujahid said, فِى جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ In her neck is a twisted rope of **Masad**.

> "This means a collar of iron.''
>
> Don't you see that the Arabs call a pulley cable a **Masad**.

A Story of Abu Lahab's Wife harming the Messenger of Allah

Ibn Abi Hatim said that his father and Abu Zurah both said that Abdullah bin Az-Zubayr Al-Humaydi told them that Sufyan informed them that Al-Walid bin Kathir related from Ibn Tadrus who reported that Asma' bint Abi Bakr said,

> "When تَبَّتْ يَدَا أبي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ (Perish the two hands of Abu Lahab and perish he!) was revealed, the one-eyed Umm Jamil bint Harb came out wailing, and she had a stone in her hand. She was saying,
>
> `He criticizes our father, and his religion is our scorn, and his command is to disobey us.'
>
> The Messenger of Allah was sitting in the **Masjid** (of the **Ka`bah**) and Abu Bakr was with him. When Abu Bakr saw her he said,

`O Messenger of Allah! She is coming and I fear that she will see you.'

The Messenger of Allah replied, إِنَّهَا لَنْ تَرَانِي Verily, she will not see me.

Then he recited some of the Qur'an as a protection for himself.

This is as Allah says,

وَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرءَانَ جَعَلْنَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالاٌّخِرَةِ حِجَابًا مَّسْتُورًا

> And when you recite the Qur'an, We put between you and those who believe not in the Hereafter, an invisible veil. (17:45)

So she advanced until she was standing in front of Abu Bakr and she did not see the Messenger of Allah.

She then said,

`O Abu Bakr! Verily, I have been informed that your friend is making defamatory poetry about me.'

Abu Bakr replied,

`Nay! By the Lord of this House (the **Ka`bah**) he is not defaming you.'

So she turned away saying,

`Indeed the Quraysh know that I am the daughter of their leader.'''

Al-Walid or another person said in a different version of this **Hadith**,

"So Umm Jamil stumbled over her waist gown while she was making circuits **(Tawaf)** around the House (the **Ka`bah**) and she said,

`Cursed be the reviler.'

Then Umm Hakim bint Abdul-Muttalib said,

> `I am a chaste woman so I will not speak abusively and I am refined so I do not know. Both of us are children of the same uncle. And after all the Quraysh know best.''

This is the end of the Tafsir of Surah **Masad**, and all praise and blessings are due to Allah.